



Federal Highway Administration

# **Rural Transportation Planning Workshops**

## ***Pennsylvania Workshop***

Including

*Delaware*  
*Maryland*  
*New York*  
*Ohio*

**FINAL DRAFT**

Summer 1999

**Dye Management Group, Inc.**

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*Road mileage data included in this report is from the Federal Highway Administration, 1996, and can be accessed at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/1996/section5.html](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/1996/section5.html).*

Federal Highway Administration

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*Pennsylvania Workshop*



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**Attachment A: Participants**

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**Federal Highway Administration**

# **Rural Transportation Planning Workshops**

## *Pennsylvania Workshop*



## **1.0 Introduction**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), assisted by Dye Management Group, Inc., conducted a series of regional rural transportation planning workshops from October 1998 through July 1999. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) hosted the third regional workshop on February 24-25, 1999, in Harrisburg.

These workshops were structured to allow the exchange of success stories and dialogue between neighboring states and their representatives on how to make rural transportation planning effective. In addition, the workshops were used to assemble information on how local elected officials are involved in the statewide transportation planning process. Officials from Delaware, Maryland, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, including planning representatives, district/county engineers, local elected officials, rural planning organizations, economic development agencies, tribal governments, departments of transportation, and rural transit operators were invited to attend. The information gathered at the Pennsylvania workshop is presented for each state individually. Overall workshop findings and conclusions follow the state summaries.

## **1.1 Objectives**

The purpose of the workshops was to foster dialogue and the exchange of ideas, not formal presentations. The objectives of the workshops were to:

- Explore and promote effective ways to involve rural officials in the statewide transportation planning process.
- Enable participants to share experiences in rural transportation planning and programming.
- Build relationships among participants that can form the basis for future cooperation and coordination.
- Identify the most effective roles and responsibilities for rural transportation providers and users.

- Determine rural transportation needs and issues that are being addressed by planning and programming.
- Identify best practice planning techniques used in developing successful rural projects.
- Obtain information for a report to Congress on how responsive state transportation plans and the statewide transportation planning process are to rural concerns and how rural officials are involved in the planning process.

These objectives were achieved by working through an agenda of discussion topics. Workshop participants were asked to come prepared to provide input around specific questions that they were given in advance.

## **1.2 Discussion Topics**

Five principal discussion topics were addressed in the workshop. Knowledgeable individuals from each state, from both the state department of transportation perspective and the local rural perspective, were asked to address these discussion topics. The topics were:

- **The Process and the Outcome: How Planning for Rural Areas Is Conducted**

This topic covered the following questions:

- How is planning for rural areas conducted?
- How are rural transportation needs addressed in the development of the statewide transportation improvement program?
- How are rural officials involved in decision making?
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses in your state?

- **Jurisdictional Roles, Responsibilities, and Funding**

This topic covered the following questions:

- What are the jurisdictional roles and responsibilities in your state for planning, programming, and funding improvements in rural areas?
- How are plan decisions funded?

- **Integration/Coordination with Other Plans**

This topic covered the following questions:

- How are local/regional plans coordinated with other plans?

- How are local rural goals balanced against regional/statewide goals and objectives?

- **Success Stories**

This topic covered the following question:

- What success stories do you have of innovative programs and projects that address rural needs?

- **Other Issues**

This topic covered the following question:

- What are the major rural transportation issues facing rural areas in your state, for all modes?

## **1.3 Participants**

State departments of transportation were solicited to host the rural transportation planning workshops. Based upon the response, host states were identified and nearby states were then invited to attend.

Knowledgeable individuals, from both the state department of transportation perspective and the local rural perspective, were invited to attend the workshops. The objective was to have approximately five people from each state, representing a variety of rural transportation stakeholders, actively participate in the workshop forum. Participants included local, state, and federal planning representatives; county engineers and commissioners; local elected officials; councils of governments; regional planning organizations; economic development agencies; tribal governments; and rural transit operators. National organizations represented at the workshops included the:

- Community Transportation Association of America.
- Federal Highway Administration.
- Federal Transit Administration.
- National Association of Counties.
- National Association of County Engineers.
- National Association of Development Organizations.

The local elected officials who participated in the workshops included rural mayors, county commissioners, judges/county executives, public works directors, trustees, and former state legislators.

## **1.4 Report Structure**

The format of this report is based on the workshop objectives and topic areas, as follows:

- The Rural Planning Process.
- Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions.
- Major Planning Issues.
- Identified Strengths and Weaknesses.
- Success Stories.

Each of the participating states are addressed in turn. A list of workshop participants and maps of each of the states are included in the attachments.

## **2.0 Delaware**

Delaware contains 12,369 lane miles of roads, 7,830 lane miles of which are rural, and 654 of these rural miles are on the National Highway System. Six percent of rural roads are locally owned. Delaware's rural transportation planning process is considered to be top-down.

### **2.1 The Rural Planning Process**

Delaware has one county-based transportation planning council in the rural part of the state, although its activity varies. Members of this organization include local elected officials, town representatives, government employees, and citizens. In the absence of regional planning organizations, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) plans for local jurisdictions with local input through its Council of Transportation. Expansion and systems management projects are ranked locally through public meetings; all other projects are determined by DelDOT.

All three of Delaware's counties have their own comprehensive long-range plans, which constitute the statewide plan. DelDOT offers staff support so that regional plans don't conflict with the state plan. Only one county in Delaware is rural.

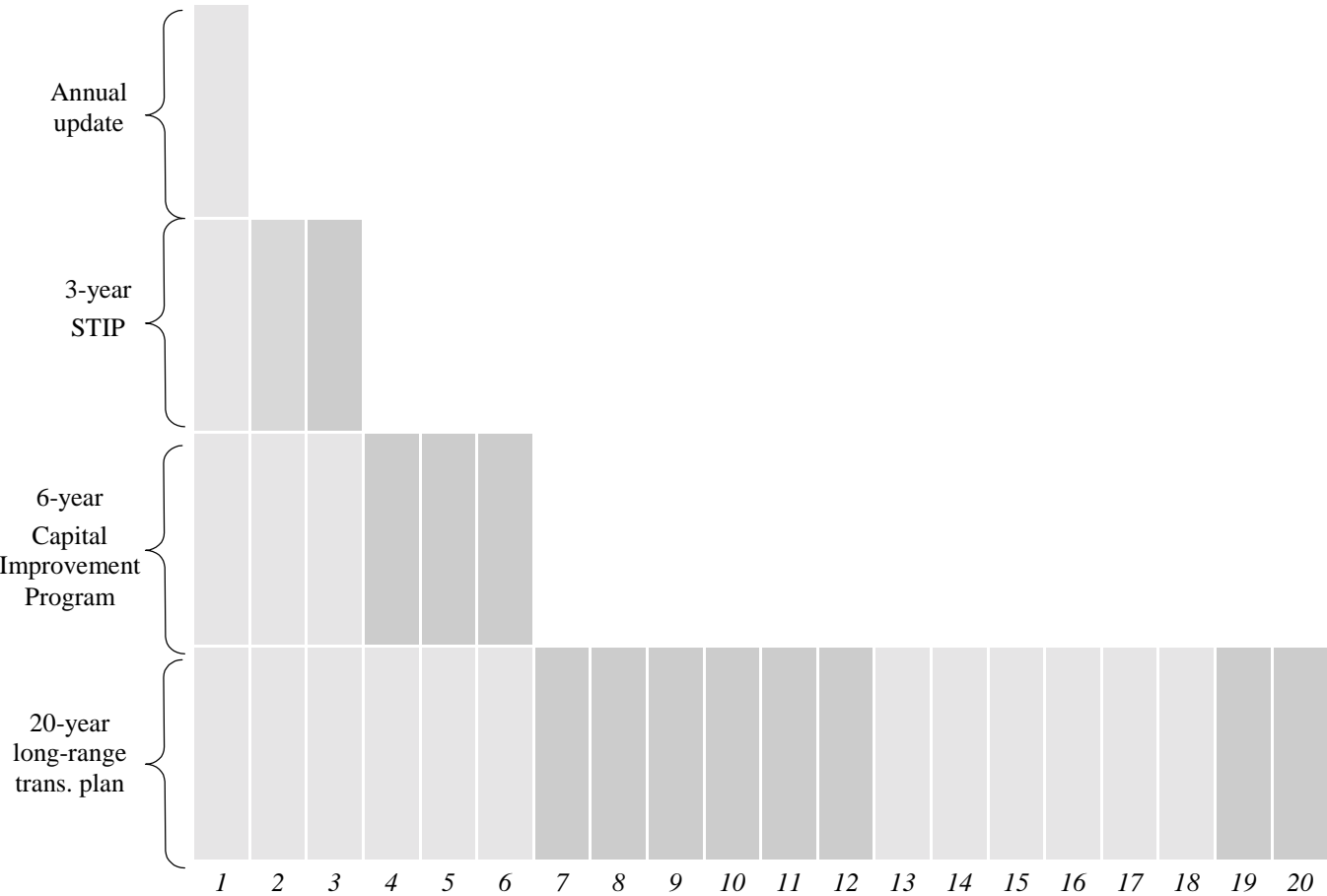
#### ***Principal Rural Planning Activities***

- Each fall the Council of Transportation holds public meetings in each county to gather input.
- DelDOT accrues a list of needs and projects then prioritizes them for the Capital Improvement Program, a six-year plan of projects, based on 14 criteria factors established by the Council of Transportation. The first three years formulate the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP).
- The Council of Transportation holds another series of public meetings at the beginning of the calendar year to review the Capital Improvement Program.
- The governor, working in conjunction with DelDOT, revises and recommends the Capital Improvement Program to the general assembly.
- The general assembly reviews and approves the program in the summer.

Exhibit 2a illustrates Delaware's transportation planning process.



**Exhibit 2a: Rural Planning Integration in Delaware**



***Local Elected Official Involvement***

Local elected officials are encouraged to provide input to DelDOT about regional projects and planning at the Council of Transportation’s public meetings.

Each state representative receives \$300,000 annually to distribute to local projects at their discretion, enabling some rural areas to easily take care of small needs.

**2.2 Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions**

DelDOT handles all transportation funding. Delaware does not use a formula for distributing funds. Instead, funds are disbursed on a project basis in the following categories, given in order of DelDOT priority:

- Preservation and maintenance.
- Management and operations.
- Expansion.
- Program development.

Applications are solicited annually for federal transportation enhancement projects up to \$500,000. An advisory committee – consisting of staff, local elected officials, and citizens – prioritizes and recommends projects to the secretary of transportation, who then selects projects for programming.

## **2.3 Major Planning Issues**

The following major rural planning issues were identified during the workshop.

- DelDOT and local governments often disagree on access management issues, especially regarding beaches. DelDOT controls transportation infrastructure planning, but local governments control land use decisions and development approvals.

DelDOT is revising its statewide access management policies. The department is also educating rural areas on the importance of access management and showing why it needs to be improved. DelDOT does not provide transportation infrastructure to designated no-growth areas.

- Local governments are often leery of DelDOT decisions.

Local governments have begun hiring outside consultants to assess DelDOT plans. The consultants typically validate the plans and improve the local jurisdiction's attitude toward DelDOT.

## **2.4 Identified Strengths and Weaknesses**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during the workshop.

### ***Strengths***

- Due to the lack of regional planning organizations, DelDOT has significant control over the planning process and growth management.
- DelDOT has increased its public outreach efforts through the use of the Council of Transportation.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The rural planning process is generally controlled by DelDOT. Local governments believe DelDOT has too much control and sometimes overrules local desires.
- Some small towns believe that DelDOT's preservation policies hinder their ability to grow economically.

## **2.5 Success Stories**

Through its technology transfer center, DelDOT has been organizing transportation planning workshops for state employees and local governments. Issues covered include land use planning, conducting public hearings, management, and other topics that local jurisdictions don't have the resources to study. The workshops have produced positive feedback and built confidence between the planning process levels.

## **3.0 Maryland**

Maryland contains 65,162 lane miles of roads, 33,112 lane miles of which are rural, and 2,982 of these rural miles are on the National Highway System. Seventy-six percent of rural roads are locally owned. Maryland's rural transportation planning process is considered to be top-down.

### **3.1 The Rural Planning Process**

Maryland has one planning organization, which does not have formal planning responsibilities. Fifteen of Maryland's 23 counties are rural and do comprehensive planning in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA). Counties must update their plans every six years, which are factored into the STIP every three years.

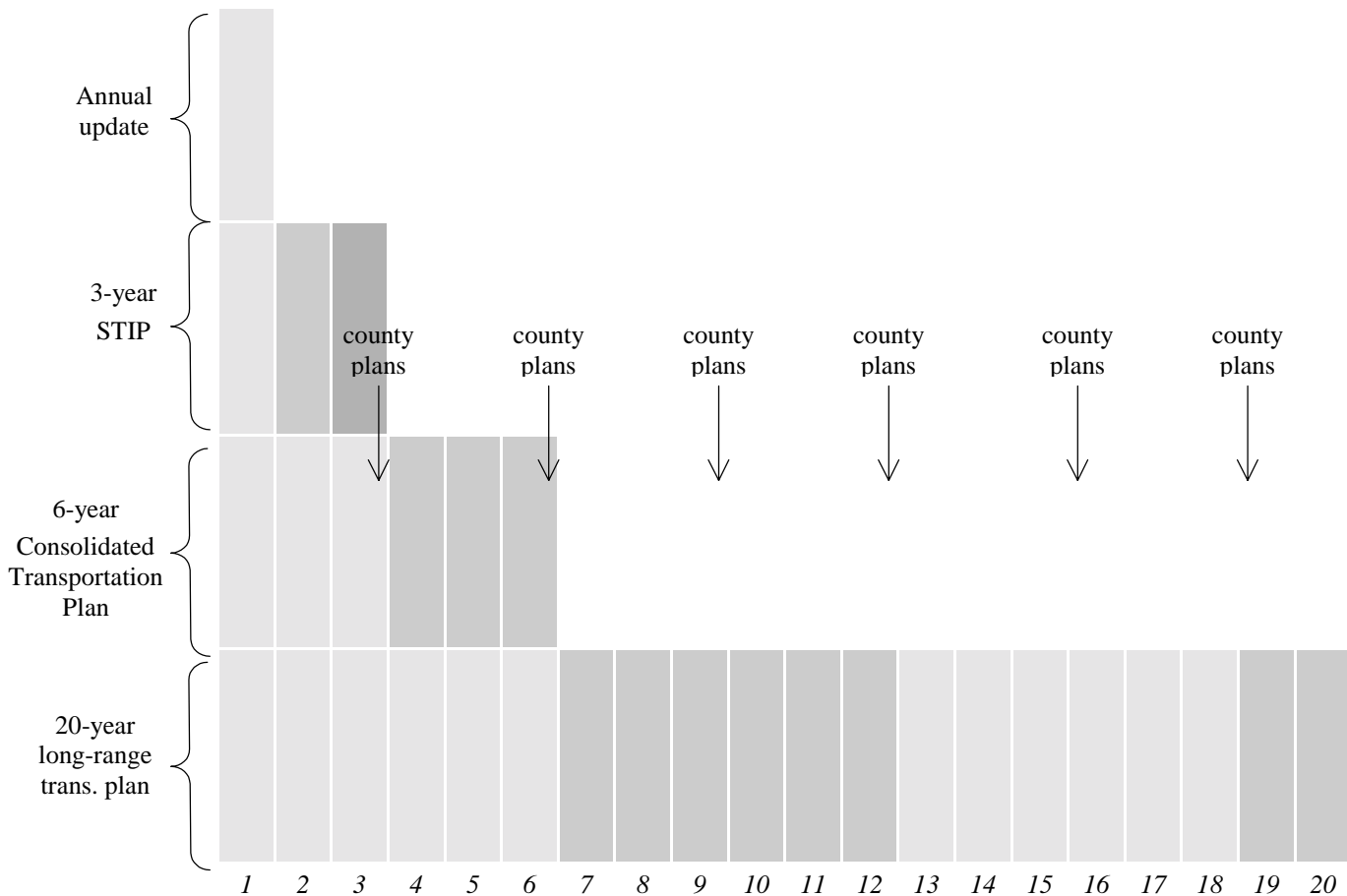
#### ***Principal Rural Planning Activities***

Projects proposed for funding are assembled in a draft Consolidated Transportation Program through the following process:

- MDOT works with local and state elected officials to identify priorities and projects for inclusion in the draft Consolidated Transportation Plan.
- Before conducting the annual tour for input on the Consolidated Transportation Plan, MDOT staff go on a pre-tour and brief the counties, their staff, and local elected officials on the plan's content. In addition, information is forwarded to the secretary of transportation so he/she can prepare for discussion before visiting that county.
- Every fall MDOT presents the draft to each of the counties as part of the secretary of transportation's annual tour to solicit input on proposed projects.
- Based on input received at the meetings, the Consolidated Transportation Plan is revised and submitted first to the Governor and then to the General Assembly.
- During the winter session, the General Assembly approves the first year of the program as part of the state's budget.
- In the summer, projects in areas with poor air quality are tested for consistency with the state's clean air plan by the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). If these projects pass this test, they are incorporated by reference into the Consolidated Transportation Plan and then submitted to federal officials for approval.
- In October, federal agencies approve the program and funds become available.

Exhibit 3a illustrates Maryland's transportation planning process.

### Exhibit 3a: Rural Planning Integration in Maryland



#### *Local Elected Official Involvement*

MDOT solicits input from local elected officials every year during the secretary of transportation’s county-by-county tour for input on the Consolidated Transportation Plan. Their primary role is the identification of local needs, and to have a close relationship with the MDOT district engineer. Local elected officials are entitled to have a secondary program priority list of projects they want added to the main statewide list.

## 3.2 Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions

MDOT replaces all federal funding with state funding. Funds are distributed by need, which has caused some friction between rural and urban areas. System preservation projects receive top priority. Rural needs generally are not identified through technical analysis, but rather by discussion with local elected officials. Approximately one-third of

the county transportation funding comes from the state, one-third from the federal government (exchanged for state funds), and one-third from local property taxes.

Applications are solicited annually for \$8 million in federal transportation enhancement project funding. A committee consisting of MDOT, MSHA, and related staff select proposals to be funded.

### **3.3 Major Planning Issues**

The following major rural planning issues were identified during the workshop.

- There is no transit planning, and rural transportation agencies are generally non-profit providers and social service organizations that operate independently of each other.

The Maryland Mass Transit Administration, in conjunction with a state college, is attempting to coordinate non-profit, social, elderly, and disabled transportation programs and begin a five-year cycle of transit/paratransit planning. Consultants are also being dispatched to each region to assist with planning and program integration.

- Whether or not transportation needs are met is evaluated in terms of project delivery.

Proposed projects are often considered synonymous with needs because they have the support of the county commissioner. But because these projects are not tied to a plan or technical evaluation, they may not be necessary to the transportation system. MDOT counteracts this by letting them sit in the STIP, but doing so prevents smaller and more necessary projects from being accomplished.

### **3.4 Identified Strengths and Weaknesses**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during the workshop.

#### ***Strengths***

- The MSHA has a good working relationship with the counties. This cooperation has resulted in many access management plans and feasibility studies, in addition to contributions to local transportation plans.
- MDOT strives to achieve local elected official consensus on priorities on the primary system, and county officials prioritize state secondary systems projects for inclusion into the Capital Transportation Plan.
- Three rural counties are becoming more sophisticated with their planning and development, are hiring transportation planners, and are learning about federal regulations.

- MDOT is responsive and cooperative on special transportation projects.
- MDOT is involved in many regional and multistate studies, and tries to balance its program based on overall need rather than jurisdictional equality.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Very few rural counties have their own transportation planner.
- Counties need more predictability for funding.
- There is a high turnover rate for transportation commissioners. As a result, there is continual adjustment as the new commissioners learn their positions.
- The interest of local elected officials often pressures MDOT to pay more attention to projects in their counties, rather than on regional needs.

### **3.5 Success Stories**

In an example of state-local cooperation, MSHA conducted a study validating approval for a parallel route to Highway 2-4 and got the necessary approval. Calvert County, which is bisected by the highway, then worked with locals to have them voluntarily provide half of the right-of-way setbacks. The farmers maintain their access rights, but cannot develop there.

## **4.0 New York**

New York contains 238,074 lane miles of roads, 146,661 lane miles of which are rural, and 8,400 of these rural miles are on the National Highway System. Eighty-four percent of rural roads are locally owned. New York's rural transportation planning process is considered to be a blend of top-down and bottom-up methods.

### **4.1 The Rural Planning Process**

New York has nine regional planning and development boards which, due to recent legislation and reorganization efforts within the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), may have increased planning responsibilities. Each planning and development board has a transportation committee. Forty-four of New York's 62 counties participate in a planning and development board. Currently, regional planning is conducted by NYSDOT's 11 district offices, which gather local input to select and prioritize projects. Public involvement procedures vary and are determined by each district within statewide policy guidance.

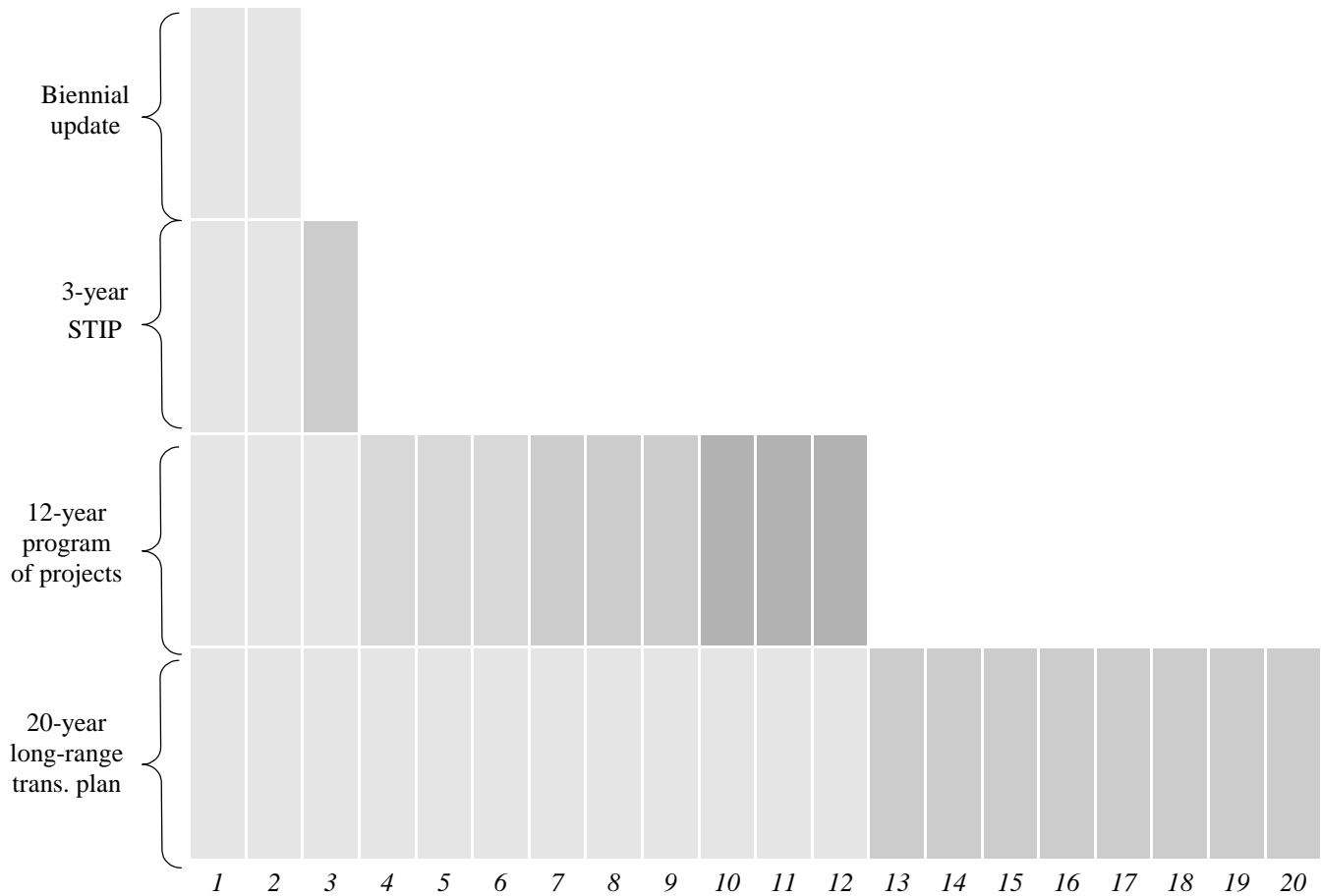
#### ***Principal Rural Planning Activities***

- Each NYSDOT district, typically working in conjunction with its regional planning and development board or other rural partner through the resident county engineer, gathers input on transportation needs and projects at public meetings.
- When a need is validated through local and regional studies, NYSDOT and local agencies identify solutions. These needs are then included in the district's regional plan. Some regional planning and development boards also develop their own plans.
- The STIP consists of all the districts' plans combined. There is no statewide project ranking. The STIP is available for public comment each fall.

Exhibit 4a illustrates New York's transportation planning process.



## Exhibit 4a: Rural Planning Integration in New York



### *Local Elected Official Involvement*

Local elected officials are encouraged to work with the NYSDOT district offices and regional planning and development boards, and to attend public meetings.

## 4.2 Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions

Federal funding is distributed to the NYSDOT districts on an allocation basis. The districts then distribute the funds to their counties, which in turn distribute the money to towns and villages. Counties and municipalities must compete with state projects; there are no exceptions. Counties also compete against each other for state bridge funding, although NYSDOT has reserved a portion of its Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) increase in bridge funds for locally-owned bridges.

There are two sources of state funding – the consolidated highway improvement fund for work on the existing system and the multimodal program. Funding is divided between regions based on population, square miles, lane miles, etc. Funding for high-speed rail is separate from other categories and exclusive of allocation factors.

### **4.3 Major Planning Issues**

The following major rural planning issues were identified during the workshop.

- Counties must compete against each other for state bridge funding.

To enhance their chances in competition against larger and more urban counties, rural counties worked together to create a scoring method to prioritize bridges. Each county first develops their own bridge list and submits it to the county engineers, who make sure everyone gets a fair share of money.

- Some regional planning and development boards feel that the plans they do create are not used by NYSDOT.

NYSDOT is seeking ways to more effectively connect its capital programs and regional plans in rural areas; the programs should respond to the plans, but the plans must be both pragmatic and visionary. They are working toward having a planning “script” for all the regions to follow and have more coordination at the vision level, not just at the project level.

### **4.4 Identified Strengths and Weaknesses**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during the workshop.

#### ***Strengths***

- There is a standard goal of public involvement and input, and traditionally underserved populations are being reached.
- Many regions feel that NYSDOT’s reorganization is headed in the right direction, although it may take a few more years to become standardized.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Very few planning and development boards have transportation planners.
- When opportunities are presented to discuss transportation with NYSDOT, it usually regards maintenance and detour schedules and not planning. Many regional planning and development boards believe NYSDOT’s philosophy has changed with the reorganization, but not its actions.

- When done, regional plans generally are not multimodal or comprehensive, but rather fragmented. Most points of planning cooperation are project-specific, and most organizations involved in transportation planning are social service agencies. In addition, transportation planning is not done in conjunction with economic development planning.
- The number and kind of people attending rural transportation planning meetings fluctuates, and plans can change based on a difference of a few people.
- Counties and towns must compete with state projects, making it hard for them to compete for federal funding and pushing their projects down the priority list (except in the case of TEA-21 bridge funds set aside for locally-owned bridges).

## **4.5 Success Stories**

Local elected officials and the public are becoming more involved in transportation planning, and are learning how to help themselves. The Local Bridge Conference is a successful partnership to address local bridge needs with separate funds and programs.

## **5.0 Ohio**

Ohio contains 242,051 lane miles of roads, 167,966 lane miles of which are rural, and 8,983 of these rural miles are on the National Highway System. Eighty percent of rural roads are locally owned. Ohio's rural transportation planning process is considered to be top-down.

### **5.1 The Rural Planning Process**

Ohio has 20 regional planning and development organizations with limited planning responsibilities. The state is divided into regional development areas, but county membership is not compulsory and only eight organizations conduct transportation and transit planning. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) conducts most of the planning for rural areas through its 12 district offices, although some rural counties are starting to do their own planning as well. The county engineer often serves as the regional transportation planner.

Many of the 16 MPOs are partnered with a rural region. Some rural planning and development organizations act as handling agencies for MPOs; essentially, the MPO is a committee under the auspices of the larger planning agency. Transportation planning for area that is within the planning organization's boundary, but outside the MPO boundary, is not the responsibility of the MPO.

In 1995 ODOT created the Transportation Review Advisory Council as part of an objective project selection process. The council – which consists of nine members appointed by the governor, speaker of the house, and president of the senate – holds six public meetings throughout the state each year to gather public input on transportation needs. The Transportation Review Advisory Committee is charged with prioritizing new projects over \$5 million for the state.

#### ***Principal Rural Planning Activities***

The typical annual planning cycle is as follows in even-numbered years:

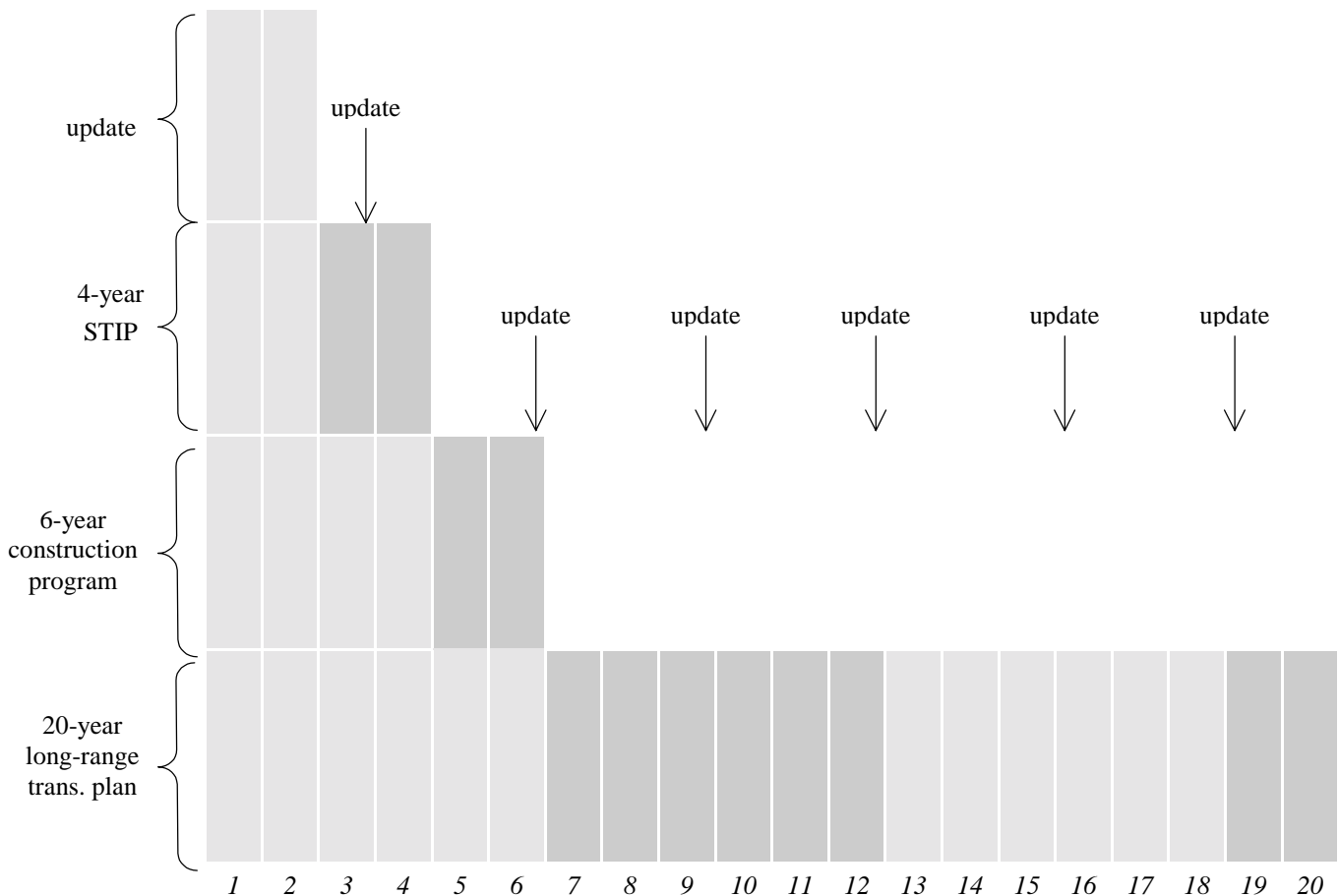
- Major new projects are proposed in the spring to the Transportation Review Advisory Council by ODOT, MPOs, county and municipality officials, transit and port authorities, and county engineers.
- In the fall, the council holds up to six public hearings and other working meetings to review nominated projects.
- ODOT and MPOs begin process to update the STIP, which is the first four years of the six-year major new construction program. A draft of the construction program is released for public comment.

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- In the winter, MPOs and ODOT districts hold public meetings on projects under their jurisdiction to be included in the upcoming STIP.
- The draft STIP is published in the spring for public comment.
- The updated major new construction program is published in the summer by the council to coincide with the STIP. The STIP will include all categories of projects, including major new capacity projects.
- A final project list is generally adopted by June 30.
- ODOT holds approximately 200 project-specific public meetings each year, and another 100 meetings with civic associations and local elected officials.

Exhibit 5a illustrates Ohio’s transportation planning process.

### Exhibit 5a: Rural Planning Integration in Ohio



### ***Local Elected Official Involvement***

Local elected officials may propose projects to the Transportation Review Advisory Committee on behalf of their constituents, lobby the committee directly to advance a particular project's ranking, and petition to be appointed to the committee. Local officials may also assist in planning through their regional planning and development organization.

## **5.2 Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions**

ODOT distributes funds to its district offices, which then prioritize their projects. MPOs sign off on urban projects, while ODOT usually provides the final approval for rural projects. Of the 22 cents per gallon state motor fuel tax, 2.2 cents goes directly to municipalities, 2 cents to counties, and 1.1 cents to townships for highways under their jurisdiction. The Transportation Improvement Fund for local governments also receive 1 cent.

In addition, counties and municipalities may levy a license tax up to \$15 per vehicle for transportation purposes and are eligible for various ODOT rural programs, including the following:

- The County Local Bridge Program allocates \$25 million annually for bridge replacement and rehabilitation. The County Engineers' Association of Ohio establishes the project selection and funding criteria.
- The county STP program provides \$18 million in federal funds annually to counties through the County Engineers' Association of Ohio, for eligible local road and bridge projects.
- The Highway Safety Program provides \$28 million annually for improving the safety of the existing state highway system.

The State of Ohio also provides rural transit agencies with approximately \$660,000 annually in far subsidies for the elderly and disabled from the General Revenue Fund, and \$4.3 million in state matches to federal funds for operation and capital expenses.

## **5.3 Major Planning Issues**

The following major rural planning issues were identified during the workshop.

- When more funding goes to the Transportation Review Advisory Committee, less money goes into maintenance, preservation, and safety.

To balance out funding, 80% of transportation money must go toward maintenance and preservation of the existing system, with the remainder allocated for new

construction. If the Transportation Review Advisory Committee accepts a new project for funding, then the project on the bottom of the ranking list is dropped.

- There is a need for improved access management. Many developers do not plan for access – perhaps not constructing a frontage road when one should be in place or purchasing a site unsuitable for any access – but there are no regulations in place to enforce better zoning and planning.

A county engineer has begun to hold public hearings regarding this problem.

## **5.4 Identified Strengths and Weaknesses**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during the workshop.

### ***Strengths***

- ODOT does not waver from its principle that preservation projects have priority and receive at least 80% of funding.
- Some counties are developing their own transportation improvement programs (TIPs).
- The Ohio Association of Regional Councils sponsors and encourages educational efforts that enhance understanding of the services rendered by planning agencies to local governments and the public. It also assists local elected officials to participate in the planning process.

### ***Weaknesses***

- Because MPOs are often partnered with rural regions, there is an inherent competition for funding and project prioritization. Also, plans often only represent the MPO area since regulations only permit funding for them.
- The planning process is considered to be only a review of the STIP, and many feel ODOT does not adequately solicit input or coordinate. Rural counties do not have a voice or an input process to follow.
- Decision-making over projects is done at the state level and not at the regional level. Elected officials often push certain projects ahead, and some feel the Transportation Review Advisory Committee process is faulty. Many regions say that 70% of the committee's ranking points are based on firm criteria, and the other 30% are subjective, political points.
- The Transportation Review Advisory Committee is not required to have a ratio of certain projects (such as interstate projects versus county projects) nor create a multi-

modal balance. Most projects tend to be highway-oriented, with additional points given to corridor projects.

## **5.5 Success Stories**

The farmland preservation program has raised awareness of sustainability and urban sprawl issues. To date over 50 counties are participating in this program, which mandates farmland preservation planning and allows for some funds to purchase farmland areas.



## **6.0 Pennsylvania**

Pennsylvania contains 247,826 lane miles of roads, 175,987 lane miles of which are rural, and 10,886 of these rural miles are on the National Highway System. Fifty-seven percent of rural roads are locally owned. Pennsylvania's rural transportation planning process is considered to be bottom-up.

### **6.1 The Rural Planning Process**

Pennsylvania has seven planning and development commissions, which have the same responsibilities as MPOs of creating long-range plans and TIPs. The planning commissions' plans are then combined to form the STIP.

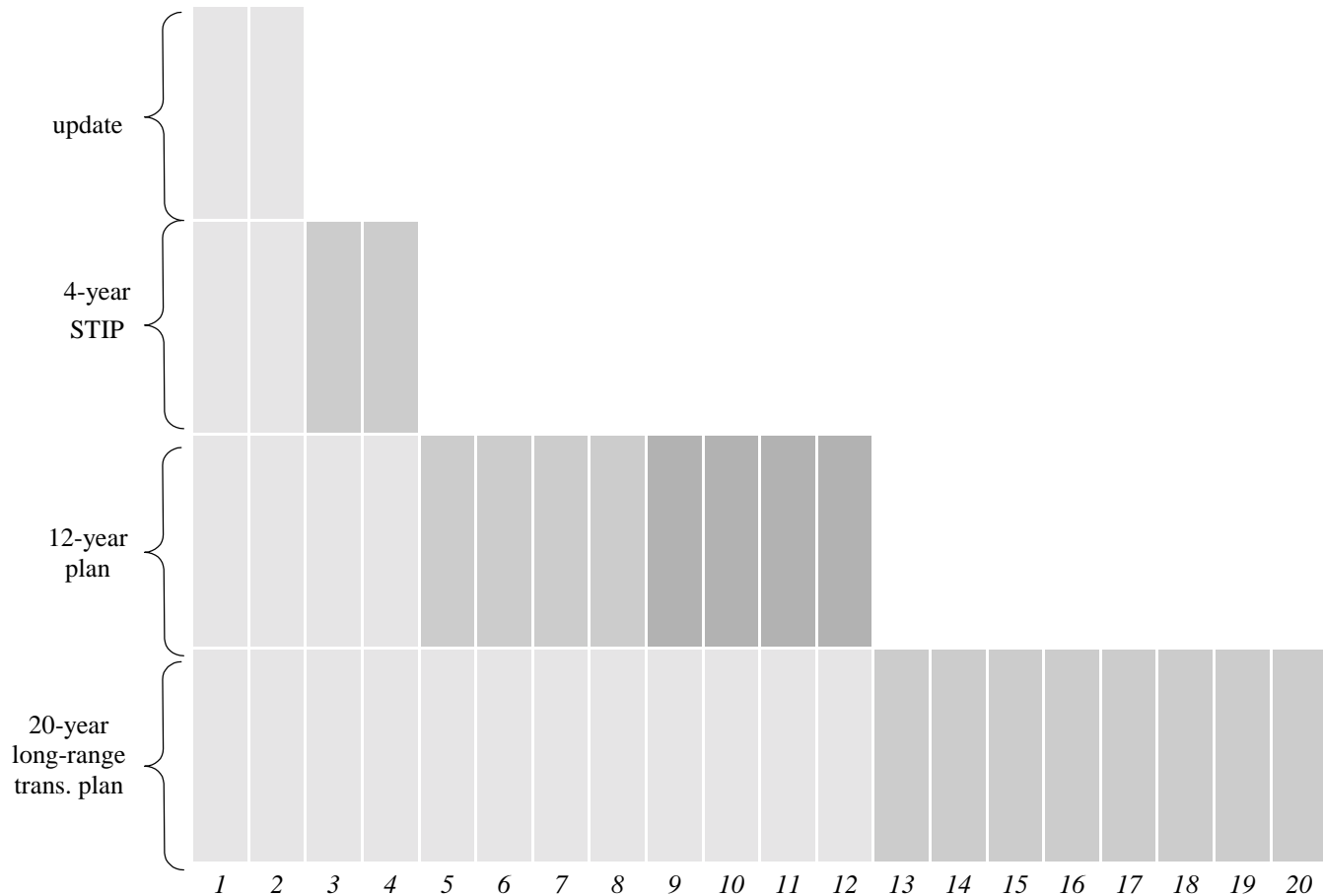
Each planning and development commission has a transportation committee, which vary in name, structure, and membership by region. Each county is typically represented by its commissioner, planning director, and citizen-at-large. Each committee also has two PennDOT district representatives and other federal and state partners. The transportation committees work collaboratively with PennDOT to establish rural TIPs.

PennDOT provides each planning and development commission with \$75,000 annually from its state planning and research funds for transportation planning purposes. All but two of Pennsylvania's 67 counties participate in this process through their planning and development commissions.

#### ***Principal Rural Planning Activities***

- The planning and development commissions forward their TIPs to PennDOT, the State Transportation Commission, and the State Transportation Advisory Committee for review.
- The State Transportation Commission – which consists of ten members appointed by the governor, and five PennDOT and legislative representatives – holds public hearings on demand and reviews the 12-year plan.
- The State Transportation Advisory Committee – consisting of 12 transportation and legislative leaders, along with 18 citizens appointed by the governor and senate – consults with the state transportation commission on transportation needs and project selection. The committee holds four meetings annually to discuss the 12-year plan.
- The State Transportation Commission forwards the decided plan to the governor and general assembly for approval every two years.
- The first four years of the 12-year plan become the STIP. The 20-year long-range plan consists of the current 12-year plan and eight additional years.

Exhibit 6a illustrates Pennsylvania's transportation planning process.

**Exhibit 6a: Rural Planning Integration in Pennsylvania*****Local Elected Official Involvement***

Local elected officials are encouraged to provide input through their planning and development commission, as well as at public transportation meetings. Elected officials may also seek an appointment to the State Transportation Commission or the State Transportation Advisory Committee.

**6.2 Programming and Funding for Rural Area Decisions**

Transportation funds are distributed to PennDOT for statewide and maintenance projects, to MPOs and the planning and development commissions for local projects, and to the governor and secretary of transportation for exceptionally large projects.

MPOs and rural regions receive funding based on a formula with several non-population factors. The planning and development commissions then distribute the money amongst themselves based on lane miles.

“Spike” funds for budget-breaking projects are allocated by the governor and secretary of transportation on a project-by-project basis.

## **6.3 Major Planning Issues**

The following major rural planning issues were identified during the workshop.

- Land use and zoning plans are not required, and many jurisdictions have decades-old regulations, if any.

The governor recently recommended that land use planning be addressed more, and efforts are underway to show local governments its importance. Land use and zoning issues are currently dealt with locally on a case-by-case basis.

## **6.4 Identified Strengths and Weaknesses**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during the workshop.

### ***Strengths***

- County plans are incorporated into regional TIPs, which are then incorporated without changes into the STIP by PennDOT.
- PennDOT has a good working relationship with the planning and development commissions. “The books are open” regarding funding and planning, and efforts are made to share information.
- Pennsylvania has a fiscally-constrained program with local input, and the planning and development commissions represent develop regional plans instead of PennDOT. Locals can get the priority projects they want done.
- Long-range plans are often based on corridor-specific plans. All modes of transportation are evaluated within that corridor and then the entire corridor plan is promoted, rather than the individual projects.

### ***Weaknesses***

- County commissioners would like to see better commitment to the state plan and improved coordination by PennDOT.

- Planning and development districts and MPOs disagree over major capital improvements.

## **6.5 Success Stories**

Pennsylvania's infrastructure bank has funded five needed projects so far. It enables localities to borrow match money to fund a project. Loan proceeds can be paid back over a ten-year term in numerous ways, including from fuel taxes and registration fees. Low interest rates are used to quickly rebuild the fund, so that the money can be loaned out again.

## **7.0 Workshop Findings and Conclusions**

### **7.1 Similarities**

Consensus was reached by the Pennsylvania workshop participants in many areas, most notably regarding public involvement, project development, and funding. These agreements are listed below.

- Citizens are becoming more educated and learning to provide input on transportation planning issues.
- Rural planning organizations are an effective tool in educating the public on transportation and development issues. Cooperation and communication with the local department of transportation district office greatly enhances the planning process as well.
- A region-wide and nationwide perspective on non-highway modes is needed, along with more information and data.
- Rural planning organizations must compete with metropolitan areas for money, and need the department of transportation to act as a fair arbitrator and distributor of funds.
- Communities crave the benefits of economic development, which is sometimes in conflict with their planning policies and local character.
- The different approaches used are all participatory.

### **7.2 Differences**

Differences between the states were also noted, which tended to center on governmental organization, regulations, and the programming process. These differences are listed below:

- States vary from taking a top-down approach to rural planning – like Delaware, with a small rural region – to states that have an established bottom-up approach, such as Pennsylvania.
- There is greater demand for regional planning organizations in larger states. Many citizens of small states are content in providing input to the department of transportation directly.
- Some rural planning organizations struggle to find planning funds, while others are provided with more extensive resources.

- Some rural planning organizations have a purely advisory role, while others actively develop, plan, and program their transportation projects.
- There is wide variation in the extent to which the rural plans affect the prioritization and selection of projects.
- While most states strive for a criteria-based ranking, local elected officials in some states play a very direct role in project selection and ranking.

## **Attachment A. Participants**

### ***Pennsylvania Workshop***

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New York State Association of Regional Councils  
Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development  
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Steve Bergman  
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Federal Highway Administration, OH

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County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

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Eastern Panhandle Planning and Development District,  
WV

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Federal Highway Administration

Sandy Grande  
Community Transportation Association of America  
Delmarva Community Services, MD

Bob Hall  
Transportation Planner  
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Development Commission

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Division of Planning  
Delaware Department of Transportation

Paul Knab  
Planning and Programming  
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**FINAL DRAFT**

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National Association of County Engineers State Director  
Tioga County Commissioner of Public Works, NY

Paul Lang  
Planning and Research Engineer  
Federal Highway Administration, DE

Jim McAllister  
SEDA Council of Governments, PA

Dick McCormick  
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Board, NY

Mark Middleton  
Planner  
Tri-County Council for Western Maryland

Dan Neff  
Ohio Mideastern Governments Association

Mike Nixon  
Office of Planning  
Maryland Department of Transportation

Jessica Petrewicz  
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Pennsylvania

Dean Roberts  
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Karen Roscher  
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Federal Transit Administration, PA

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Dye Management Group, Inc., WA

Donald Rychnowski  
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Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning Development  
Commission

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Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

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Pennsylvania

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Southern Alleghenies Regional Planning Development  
Commission, PA

Ralph Zampogna  
Environmental Planner  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation



## **Attachment B. Maps**

### *Delaware*

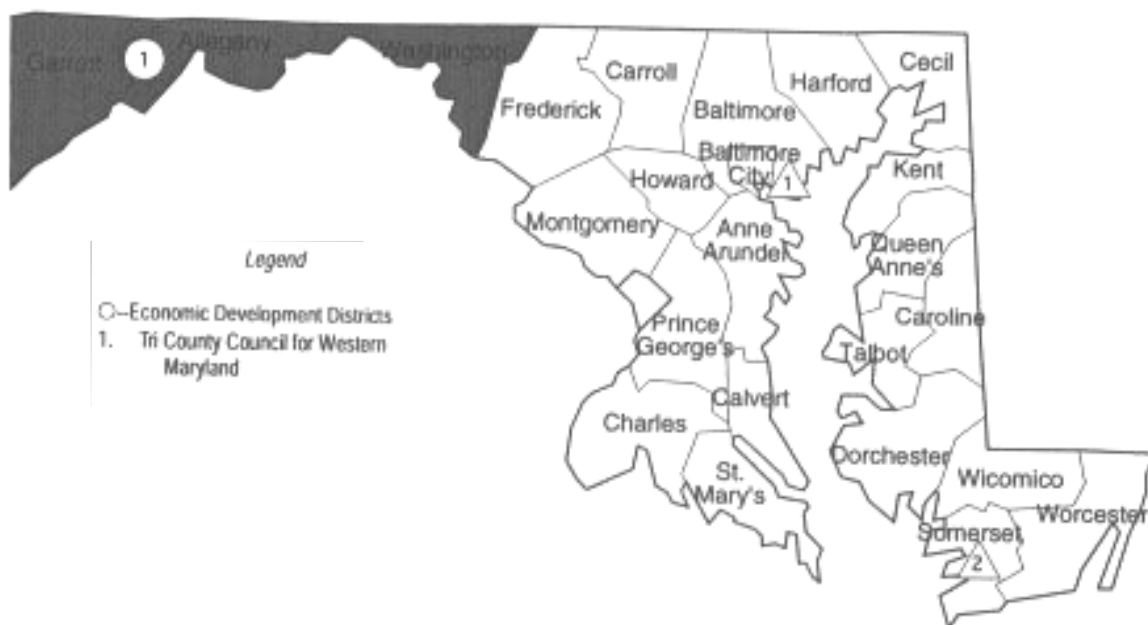


## Maryland

DOT districts

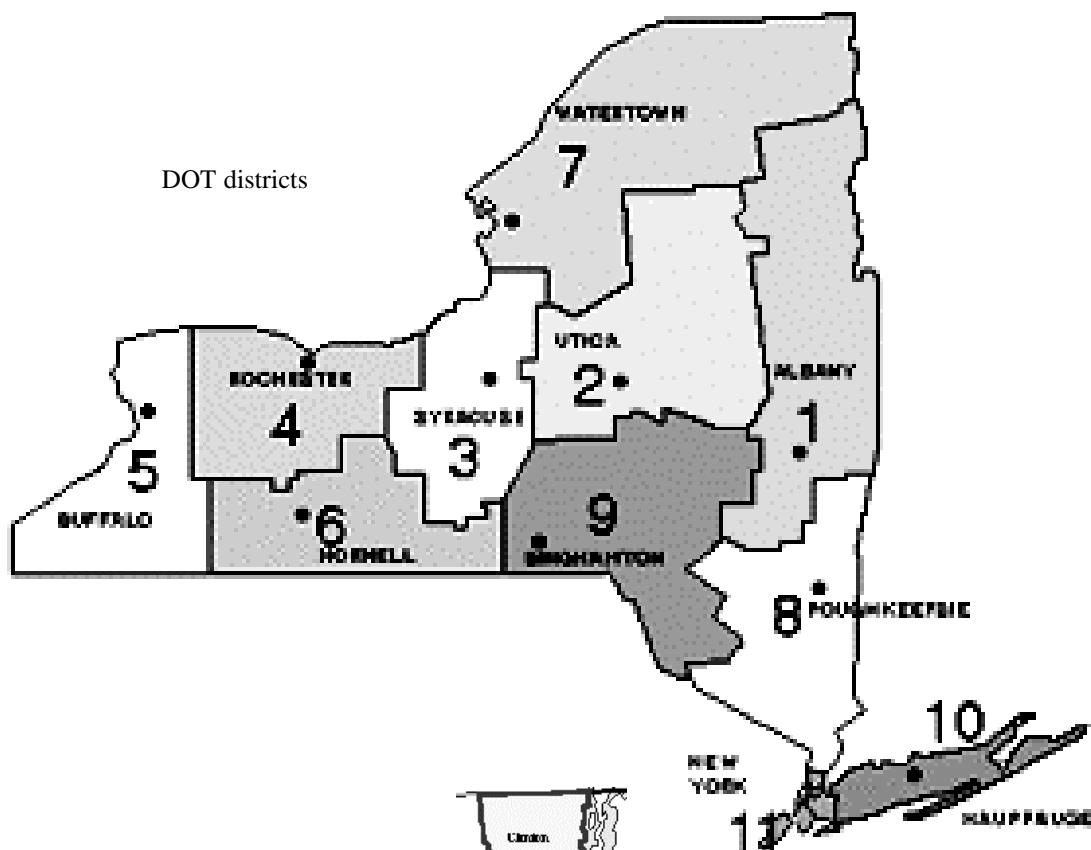


Planning organizations



## New York

DOT districts



Regional planning districts



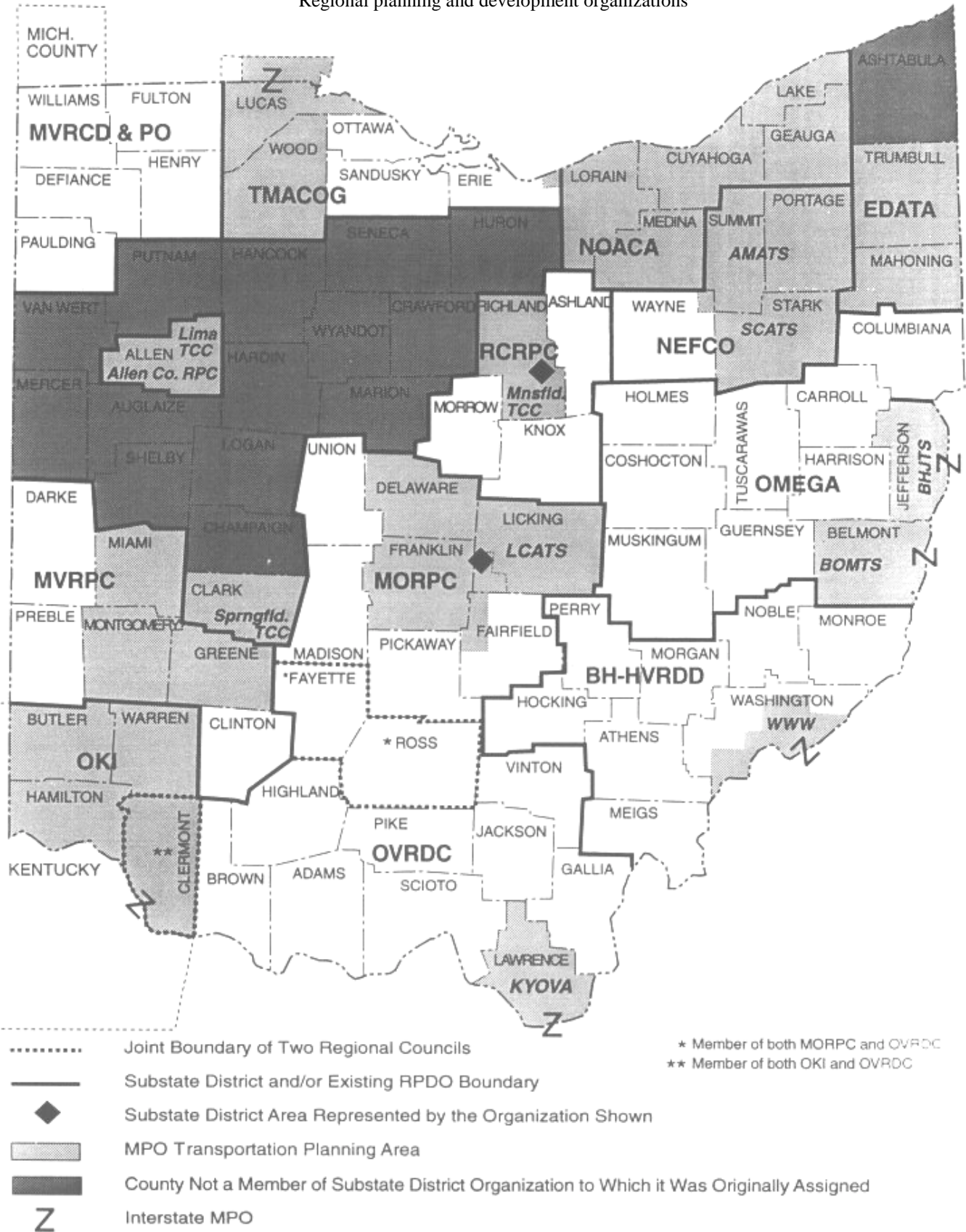
## Ohio

DOT districts



**FINAL DRAFT**

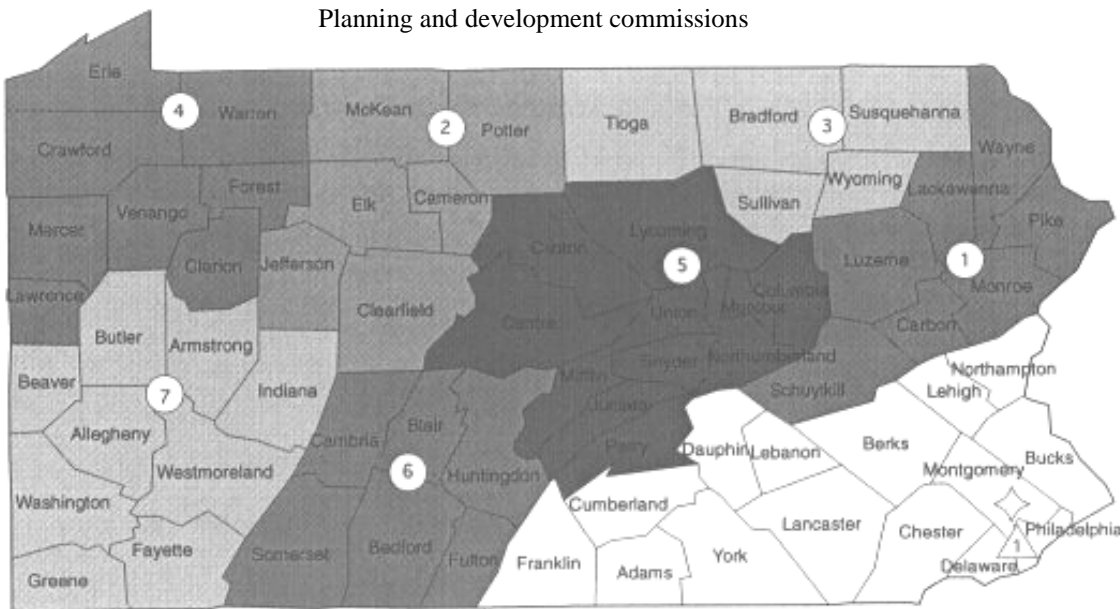
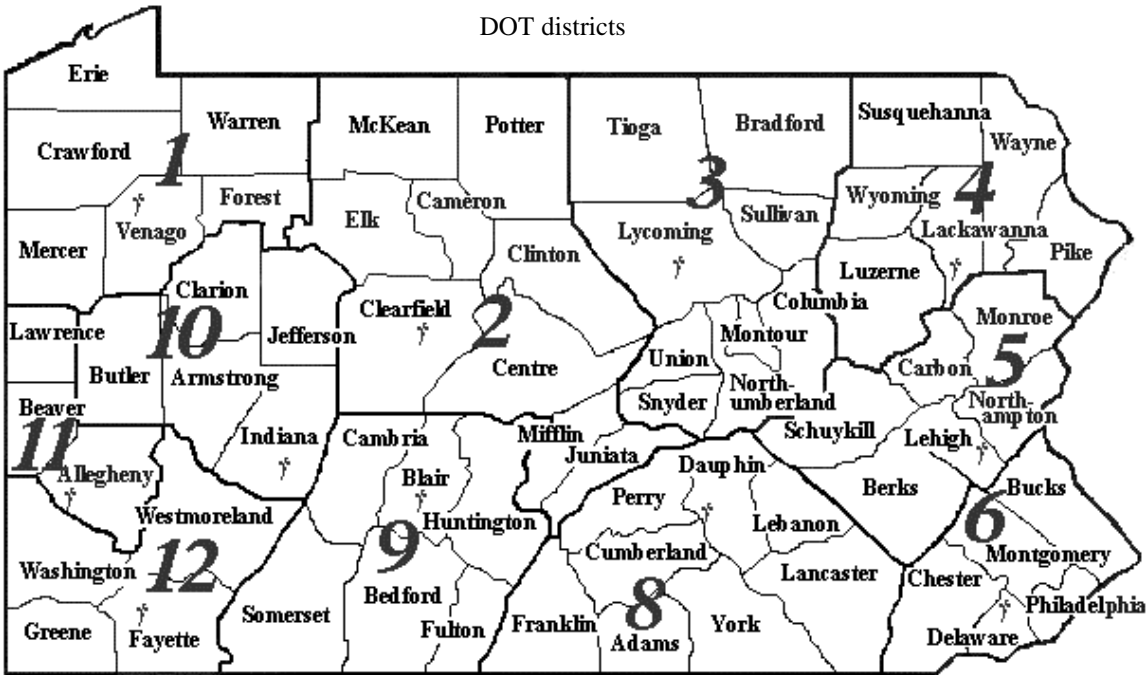
Regional planning and development organizations





**FINAL DRAFT**

# *Pennsylvania*



Legend	
○—Economic Development Districts	7. Southwestern Pennsylvania Reg. Dev. Council
1. E.D.C. of Northeastern Pennsylvania	
2. North Central Pennsylvania R.P.D.C.	
3. Northern Tier R.P.D.C.	◇—Mid-Atlantic TAAC
4. Northwest Pennsylvania R.P.D.C.	
5. SEDA C.O.G.	△—University Center
6. Southern Alleghenies P.D.C.	1. Pennsylvania State Univ